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ABSTRACT

In 1989, the president of Lamar Community College (LCC) in Colorado, together with 14 classified, faculty, and administrative staff, attended a workshop on educational quality at Fox Valley Technical College (FVTC) in an effort to begin implementing a Total Quality Management process at LCC. Following the workshop, attendees from LCC organized the Quality Improvement Council (QIC) and developed a mission statement, a values statement, and a set of guiding principles which were adopted by the college in December 1989. The following year, teams of staff, faculty, and administrators returned to FVTC to attend special training workshops on TQM implementation. Workshop attendees organized training sessions at LCC in fall 1990, consisting of 20 hours of classroom presentations and interaction. All staff at the college were expected to complete the sessions. Beginning in 1990, self-directed management teams were formed, the first one being set up within the Student Services department, followed by four more within the instructional areas. A traditional long-range planning process was initiated in summer 1991, but by February 1992 it had become obvious that the ordinary planning process would not be adequate for the TQM efforts and a new planning process was therefore initiated, involving the identification of critical processes for the campus. Among activities planned for the future are the following: staff training in the customer service model; developing a degree program in TQM; introducing quality concepts into instructional programs; and sharing LCC's experience with other institutions that are beginning to explore the quality concept. (PAA)

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QUALITY IN EDUCATION

The Journey

Time of Discovery

Time of Adjustment

Management Teams

The Future

Reflections

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Lamar Community College
March 19, 1992

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THE JOURNEY

The small guy always has to work extra hard for recognition among a crowd of larger individuals. Being smaller inspires an institution to explore institutional limits and capabilities, often leading the institution to discover a special gem in its own back yard. Lamar Community College discovered in Total Quality Management a concept that is allowing the College to incorporate its heritage, the talents of its staff and its unique mission to launch a revolution in education.

Lamar Community College's journey began in 1984 when the President started collecting articles referring to excellence and quality. Quality was intriguing and seemed a means for the College to transform itself into an institution ready to address the issues of the 21st Century. Quality would return the College to its roots and lead to customer satisfaction.

Lamar Community College was founded in 1937 as a private college. The College founding fathers believed strongly in the concept of service and commitment and were determined to provide the students who couldn't afford a university education an opportunity to complete two years of college. From its humble beginnings in 1937, Lamar Community College became a local tax-supported institution in the 1940's and in 1967 became a part of the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System. The College experienced times of growth and decline and times of direct hostility from the State Legislature. The President realized that long-term stability was possible only through delivery of a quality product which resulted in satisfied customers.

The exploration process led from articles on quality to the President preparing a proclamation signed by all Cabinet members in 1987 declaring that Lamar Community College was committed to delivering quality services to its

students. The journey into quality began to take form when the President and three key staff members attended a week-long workshop on quality presented by Fort Morgan and Front Range Community Colleges, sister members of the Colorado Community College and Occupational Education System. LCC staff were intrigued by the concept and returned to campus determined to develop the appropriate systems and training programs to guide Lamar Community College into full realization of the benefits of quality.

TIME OF DISCOVERY

Lamar Community College's search accelerated in the summer of 1989. The President and key administrators, fresh from the Fort Collins workshop, were convinced that quality concepts were the foundation upon which Lamar Community College could establish once and for all its right to exist. A journey is not planned without a road map and someone who understands the lay of the land. The President began a search to find a role model and a mentor to assist with the implementation process. That search ended when the College discovered Fox Valley Technical College and its Quality Academy. In September of 1989 the President and fourteen classified, faculty and administrative staff attended an introduction to quality workshop at Fox Valley. Those in attendance returned home after a day and a half workshop to organize a Quality Improvement Council. During the first meeting of the Quality Improvement Council, it was unanimously agreed that Lamar Community College should wholeheartedly pursue the implementation of quality. It was also agreed that the College should return to Fox Valley to participate in its two and a half day implementation workshop. Simultaneously the College also contracted for the services of Pat Bonazzoli, a consultant to assist with the initial phase of implementation. The Quality Improvement Council spent the next four months

developing a mission statement, values statement and guiding principles. After 21 drafts, a final copy was presented to the campus and adopted in December of 1989.

January of 1990 the fifteen campus representatives returned to Fox Valley for the two and a half day training in implementation. During the training the President agreed to purchase the Fox Valley materials for a Train the Trainer workshop with training to begin in the Fall of 1990.

Lamar Community College's journey was unique because it involved faculty, classified staff and administrators. Each team taken to Fox Valley Technical College included three classified staff, four faculty, the top level administrators of the campus and mid-level managers. The President was committed to including all levels of the campus in the process with janitors, secretaries, clerks, vocational and academic faculty, mid-level managers, deans, Vice Presidents, and the President participating as equals in the exploration and training.

Spring of 1990 the campus appointed a Quality Coordinator whose primary responsibility was to oversee the training of the trainers and delivery of the training. Classified staff, faculty and administrators served as co-trainers for the training. Campus trainee groups were comprised of classified, faculty, and administrators who attended the training as equals. The training consisted of 20 hours of classroom presentation and interaction and was conducted during Fall Semester of 1990. The training was made a high priority by the President with all campus staff being expected to participate in the training program. Those who missed sessions were personally visited by the President to arrange for make up.

Spring of 1990 Lamar Community College entered phase two, the implementation process, which was training in problem solving and Hoshin planning. Those in leadership positions pushed the campus to seek out diverse

sources for training so the College's experience would be unique and build on the strengths of the campus. Delaware County Community College was contacted to deliver two workshops, one on problem solving and the other on Hoshin planning. Fall of 1990 Lamar Community College found itself in a dilemma. Its Quality Coordinator had been selected for the Vice President of Instruction position and a second semester enrollment drop strained the budget, making further expenditures on training impossible. The campus found itself unable to appoint a full-time Quality Coordinator or to continue making major investments in training programs. The revised plan called for a campus staff member to work on a part-time basis to develop a training program for the College new hires. Within approximately six months it became obvious there were not sufficient resources to develop the curriculum and that the College needed a major re-thinking of its directions. Fox Valley Technical College had served as an excellent role model, mentor and Lamar Community College returned to seek advice and to council with the members of the Quality Academy.

TIME OF ADJUSTMENT

Lamar Community College's unique approach to the implementation of quality management resulted in the starting of self-directed management teams in the Fall of 1990. The Vice President of Student Services emerged as a champion for Total Quality Management and immediately began the development of self-managed teams in his department. The Student Services staff quickly grasp Total Quality Management concepts and began the process of becoming a team. Also, in the Summer of 1990, the resignation of the Vice President of Instruction, the Dean of Vocational Education's request for reassignment to a faculty position and the Director of Evening College's request for a pregnancy leave left the campus without administrative leadership for the instructional

department and with insufficient funds to hire an interim replacement. During the search for a new Vice President of Instruction and Dean of Vocational Education and while the Associate Dean of Evening College was on pregnancy leave, the President served as the chief academic officer. The work load demanded a better process for addressing the issues of the College. The answer was the creation of management teams in the instructional area. Four management teams were formed which met weekly with the President to facilitate the ongoing every day activities of instruction. The new Vice President and Dean of Vocational Education were committed to continuing the teams and willing to begin the nurturing and development process.

Summer of 1991 the campus began to revise its long-range plan. The revision had been delayed for over a year to give the new administrators time to become acquainted with their area of responsibility. August of 1991 top level administrators met for six days to develop a campus long-range plan. September of 1991 the demands of a North Central Study absorbed the time of the top level administrators and slowed the progress on the finalization of a long range plan. August of 1991 the President appointed an executive level management team charged with developing and providing oversight of the campus long range plan. The Executive Management Team spent five months struggling to bring closure to the long range plan. January of 1992 it became obvious that the ordinary campus planning process was not fitting for an institution undergoing a quality transformation. February of 1992 the Executive Management Team put aside the long range plan and began the process of identifying critical processes for the campus. The identification of critical processes resulted in the creation of a unique planning system which will be used to integrate campus systems, processes and the long range plan. The identified critical processes will become the basis for the development, revision and adoption of a campus long range plan.

MANAGEMENT TEAMS

Management teams were introduced to the campus by the Vice President of Student Services in the Spring of 1990. Lamar Community College did not start with the usual project team. It is the belief of the campus that by starting with the concept of self-directed management teams the classified, faculty and administrative staff of Lamar Community College have developed a broader understanding of the function of teams which has resulted in greater understanding of the connectedness among the various parts of the campus by those who are participating in management teams on a day to day basis. Management teams have learned to facilitate meetings, resolve differences. solve problems, recognize when the processes and problems cross over areas of responsibility, deal with frustrations when another part of the campus is not ready to address issues within quality concepts, push the administration to further clarify and define what quality means for Lamar Community College, be patient as the campus explores, becomes lost and then regains its direction as it continually explores the concepts of continuous improvement and, last but not least, believe that management teams are making a significant contribution to the campus. Management team members believe the team concept is the best thing that has happened to the College during their tenure.

Lamar Community College teams are in various stages of development and maturation. The Student Services teams are well developed and are focusing on process and problem solving. The instructional staff are learning the fine art of being a team and have tackled a long-standing problem at Lamar Community College which is the revision of the methods and procedures for developing a semester schedule in addition to taking on the task of developing a long term campus master schedule. Other teams have only been in existence a few months and are struggling with the initial phases of becoming a team.

THE FUTURE

The journey to quality is a long, frustrating, time-consuming, exhilarating, stimulating, mentally challenging and revarding experience that. if we had it to do all over again, we would! The process has only begun. It takes approximately five years for all campus staff to become familiar with and accept quality concepts. Plus, we anticipate it will take another five years to transform the organization. Quality is not a short-term process, but rather a long-term commitment.

A key factor in quality thinking is a commitment to the long-term. In the past we have focused on results and the short-term. LCC is ready to move its thinking into a long-term mode, to learn to be patient and to begin making small incremental improvements continuously. In the near future, Lamar Community College will be providing training for its staff in a customer service model, refining its planning process, revising its evaluation and revard systems, selecting campus Hoshins, continually training and retraining classified staff, faculty and administrators, developing a degree program in Total Quality Management, introducing quality concepts into ongoing instructional programs, sharing the College's experience with others beginning to explore the quality concept, and continually searching for ways to provide adequate training programs in a time of tight budgets.

REFLECTIONS

The quality journey is full of good news and bad news. The good news is that campus staff are excited about and committed to the pursuit of excellence which is accompanied by the bad news that others and the President frequently become lost. The road map for implementation, while being already available in a business setting, has recently been developed for higher education. The

translation and new map were necessary because faculty and administrators of an educational institution need the businessman's language translated into terms they understand. The process is slow and frustrating but, with patience and a strong commitment to teaching and training, a transformation unfolds.

Anyone implementing quality will always wish that they had done things differently given 20/20 hindsight. The President believes the process Lamar Community College utilized which involved classified, faculty and administrators in the initial exploration was a good move. However, he has been very frustrated trying to stay ahead of the pack. The President is expected to lead, provide leadership and know where the campus is headed. This is difficult when you're planning, mapping out the journey and learning at the same time. The President's hindsight indicates that he should have had a year of study and work with a mentor prior to the implementation process. The President's life would have been easier. The President also failed to recognize the variety of needs for training because he erroneously assumed that people who have BA's, MA's and PHD's somehow knew about facilitating meetings, working together as a team, resolving problems and developing implementation strategies. The lack of training has been a painful learning experience for team members and for the administrators providing leadership. The President recommends that anyone pursuing quality make a firm financial commitment to providing training. Changing state allocations can wreck havoc on the best of intentions, but one should not move forward in a new concept until the appropriate training has taken place.

The concept of customers is new to higher education and presents a dilemma to the faculty and administration. The literature clearly states that our goal should be to meet and exceed customer satisfaction. The dilemma is that higher education has not yet developed the appropriate systems to measure customer satisfaction. We have also failed to develop the appropriate

language linkages with the business community to facilitate communication. Educators have a difficult time talking about their accomplishments with business and industry because our measurements are expressed in terms of a grade which does not convey meaning.

The President marvels at the accomplishments of LCC teams in spite of the lack of training. They have gone through the forming, norming, storming and are now into the performing stage. LCC's most advanced teams know that they are part of a larger system. They realize the interconnectedness of the various campus systems and processes and they are beginning to recognize individual responsibilities and to hold each other accountable. The process has been healthy and has had a positive effect on the overall campus morale. Confrontations take place, but in a healthy environment of honest exploration with the primary purpose of continuous improvement. Data is being collected and is becoming part of the decision-making process. Sometimes our data lacks the sophistication of a Deming scientific investigation, but the initial phases are under way and we expect to become familiar with and proficient in the application of statistical processes.

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